

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2021

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
Chairman
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Clyburn:

We are in receipt of your letters to White House Chief of Staff Ronald Klain and Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services Norris Cochran requesting a litany of potentially privileged documents and communications from the prior administration.¹ These letters conspicuously ignore the entirety of the Biden Administration's COVID-19 response.

Since January 20, 2021, the Biden Administration set an easily achievable daily vaccination goal—a goal already on pace to be reached because of the foundation inherited from the Trump Administration.² Rather than building on the previous administration's success, the Biden Administration has executed multi-billion dollar contracts for vaccines, which are undeliverable before the summer,³ pushed overbroad and potentially harmful trillion dollar spending packages,⁴ misled the public about the existence of a vaccine rollout plan,⁵ and, most shockingly, chastised the Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for suggesting that schools should be reopened.

On February 3, 2021, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky stated schools should reopen regardless of teacher vaccination status. Specifically, Dr. Walensky said, "[t]here is increasing data to suggest that schools can safely reopen, and that safe reopening does not suggest that

¹ Letter from James E. Clyburn, Chairman, Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Crisis, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, to Ronald A. Klan, Chief of Staff, White House (Feb. 8, 2021); Letter from James E. Clyburn, Chairman, Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Crisis, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, to Norris Cochran, Acting Sec'y, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Serv. (Feb. 8, 2021).

² Tom Randall & Drew Armstrong, *Biden's 100-day vaccine goal was almost met by Trump before he left office*, BLOOMBERG NEWS (Jan. 25, 2021), <https://nationalpost.com/news/world/bidens-100-day-vaccine-goal-was-almost-met-by-trump-administration-before-he-arrived>.

³ Anne Flaherty, et. al., *Biden plans to purchase 200M more doses of Pfizer, Moderna COVID-19 vaccines*, ABC NEWS (Jan. 26, 2021), <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-announce-purchase-200m-doses-pfizer-moderna-covid/story?id=75497450>.

⁴ Lawrence H. Summers, *The Biden stimulus is admirably ambitious. But it brings some big risks, too*, THE WASH. POST (Feb. 4, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/04/larry-summers-biden-covid-stimulus/>.


⁵ Nathaniel Weixel, *Fauci: We are not 'starting from scratch' on vaccine distribution*, THE HILL (Jan. 21, 2021), <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/535327-fauci-we-are-not-starting-from-scratch-on-vaccine-distribution>.

teachers need to be vaccinated.”⁶ She added, “[v]accination[s] of teachers is not a prerequisite for safely reopening schools.”⁷ In response, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, “Dr. Walensky spoke to this in her personal capacity.”⁸

Dr. Walensky made these statements at an official White House event, in front of the CDC logo, and the transcript is available on the White House website. She was *not* speaking in her personal capacity. The CDC is planning to release a new school reopening guidance this week. If this guidance says anything other than what Dr. Walensky has previously stated, on record, it raises significant questions about the Biden Administration using political interference to sideline scientists they disagree with.

During the establishment of the Select Subcommittee you said, “[your] work would be forward looking.”⁹ Now that there is a Democrat Administration, the Select Subcommittee should not start trying to cover up for missteps they are making. Considering the above facts, we respectfully request that you amend your information request to include the dates of January 20, 2021 through the present and specifically include potential interference in upcoming CDC school reopening guidance. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Steve J. Scalise
Ranking Member
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis

⁶ Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and Public Health Officials, White House (Feb. 3, 2021) *available at* <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2021/02/03/press-briefing-white-house-covid-19-response-team-and-public-health-officials/>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, White House (Feb. 4, 2021) *available at* <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2021/02/04/press-briefing-by-press-secretary-jen-psaki-and-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-february-4-2021/>.

⁹ Press Release, Congressman Clyburn Applauds The Establishment of the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Crisis (Apr. 24, 2020), <https://coronavirus.house.gov/news/press-releases/congressman-clyburn-applauds-establishment-house-select-subcommittee-coronavirus>.